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Peru

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Peru

History

Peru is located at the center of the Andean states, bordered by Colombia and Ecuador in the north, Brazil and Bolivia in the east, and Chile in the south. The people of Peru declared their independence from Spain in 1821. Revolutionary fighting continued, however, until 1824, when all remaining Spanish forces in Peru were defeated. Peru's primary landmine problems are a result of guerilla military activity in the 1980s that afflicted its internal regions, particularly near electrical towers and power-generation stations that were mined for protection against guerilla sabotage. Border conflicts with Ecuador in the north during the mid-1990s also contributed to the contamination of the northern border of Peru with landmines.

Landmine/UXO Overview

An estimated 120,000 landmines were laid along Peru's northern border during conflicts that arose in 1995 with neighboring Ecuador. The foothills of the Cordillera del Condor region along the border were significantly mine-affected. Conflict ended in 1998, when Peru and Ecuador signed a peace treaty. The Peruvian army has since carried out surveying and demining operations along the northern border. The other primary landmine concern for Peru is near electrical towers in the Lima, Junin, Huancavelica and Ica regions. These areas were heavily mined during the late 1980s to hinder possible guerrilla attacks. The Peruvian National Police (PNP) and the Industrial Service of the Navy (SIMA) are working to demine these areas.

Casualties

An accurate report of landmine casualties in Peru is difficult to estimate because many of the mines are located in remote areas. In addition, some mine incidents may be unreported. The Organization of American States (OAS) reports that there have been 179 recorded landmine casualties in Peru since 1995. In 2001, four civilians were injured in three landmine incidents. In 2002, 19 people were injured in mine and UXO incidents in Peru. In 2003, five people were reported to have been injured due to landmines.

Demining

In December 2002, Peru created the Peruvian Mine Action Center (Contraminas), which serves as a national coordinator of mine action planning and policy. Thus far, demining in Peru has focused on two areas: the northern border with Ecuador and the areas around electrical towers in the Lima, Junin, Huancavelica and Ica regions of Peru. The Peruvian army completed mine clearance of the Zarumilla Canal and the La Palma, as well as near Aguas Verdes along the northern border. After a year of working in and around electrical towers, Peru's national police force (Policia Nacional del Peru or PNP) along with SIMA were able to clear 17,651 mines by May 2003.

Reality Check

In August of 2003 and 2004, Peru hosted two regional mine action conferences in the capital city of Lima that brought together mine action personnel



from the Americas. Peru and Ecuador have been cooperating over the past two years in an effort to demine along their border. In 2004, Peru has continued demining efforts around electrical towers. It also hopes to train and implement mine risk education programs and instructors in areas that are still mine-affected along the northern border.

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